

in the photographs tucked into the mirror frame and hanging from the gas fixtures. Her roommate had gone for the holidays, and although she was not specially fond of her, her absence added an atom to the general depression.

But it was breakfast time, and we must eat even if our hearts break, so Letty started for the dining room three floors below. As she closed her door, a girl dashed out of a room near by and came running after her. At the top of the stairs the new comer tripped and would have fallen headlong but for Letty's quick grasp.

"Bless you, Miss Ashworth! you've saved my life this time," cried the girl, steadying herself by a hand on Letty's shoulder, while she stood on one foot and tried to untangle the other from a loop of dress braid. "I expected this wretched braid would bring me to grief before it was fixed. I've had a new braid in my work-basket for a week, and haven't had a minute to put it on. There!" freeing her foot by a sudden jerk which tore off still more of the braid. "Now I've got to get into another skirt," and she hurried back to her room.

Down in the dining room an animated conversation rippled up and down the long tables. "Did you see those lovely combs at Hofner's—only fifty cents?"

"No, I shouldn't dare select a necktie for him. I'm going to give him handkerchiefs."

"Did you finish dressing your little sister's doll?" etc.

Letty bore it as long as she could, then, leaving her half-eaten breakfast, went back to her room. The factory where she worked had shut down till after Christmas, to repair the engine, so she had the day before her. If she only had some money, what a nice chance to go round the stores and buy things; or to go home for Christmas. Home! The thought was too much, and the clouds began to drop rain.

There was a knock at the door, and the chambermaid came in.

"Why, what's the matter, Katy?" asked Letty, detaching herself from her own misery enough to notice the girl's swollen face and dark circles round her eyes.

"It's an ulcerated tooth," groaned the girl. "Not a wink of sleep did I get all night."

"I'll take care of my room today," said Letty, "and I just as lief tend to the other rooms on this corridor. I'm not working today, and it will do me good to be busy about something."

As Letty went from room to room making beds and straightening rugs and chairs somehow her heart grew lighter, and when she came to the room where a skirt with trailing braid was thrown over a chair, a pleasant thought came to her. Finding a new braid in the work-basket, she took the skirt to her room, rebound it neatly, darned a tiny tear, sewed on a loose hook, and pinning a Christmas greeting on it, hung it on the chair again.

As she finished her rounds she stopped at the laundry door. "You seem to be flying round in here," she said.

"We're a little short-handed," said the laundress. "Katy helps us sort the clothes, but she has gone to bed sick, and it looks as if our work would run over into Christmas day."

"Can you use a green hand?" asked Letty. "I've nothing to do, and I'd like to help. You can call my services a Christmas present," she added, with the first smile of the day on her face.

"'Twould be the best kind of a Christmas present. Those clothes on the racks are ready to sort, and then be sent around to the rooms."

So Letty sorted and folded and the piles of clothes disappeared like magic. And when the tables were cleared the laundry girls came up with smiling faces and said, "Thank you for our Christmas present, Miss Ashworth," and Letty went down to dinner with quite an appetite. And there a new chance for service presented itself. Two or three of the girls were bewailing belated errands which required daylight.

"Behold your slave!" said Letty. "Make out your lists, and I will go through them or perish in the attempt."

So, after dinner, Letty went hither and thither, matching ribbons and silks and tassels. Coming back with loaded arms, she found a box from her Vermont home, a box filled with holly. If the waxen leaves suddenly gained a new lustre, the dewdrops which caused it were not wholly tears of unhappiness.

The day had been lived through, but the long evening was to be faced. Many of the girls had gone home for the holidays, and others were busy with their Christmas gifts, so Letty sat alone, the tide of homesickness rising higher and higher. She heard the occupant of the next room come in and shut her door. "I wonder if Miss Wilbur is homesick, too," she mused. Miss Wilbur was a comparatively new comer, a silent, reserved girl who had no intimates in the Home. Letty had always stood a little in awe of her, but now she felt a sudden impulse to go to her.

"May I come in?" said Letty, as the door opened to her knock, showing the room to be in darkness. "I'm just dying of homesickness."

"Then there are two of us," said the other girl, extending her hand and drawing her in.

"You see," Letty hurried on, with a catch in her voice, "My mother is two hundred miles away, and it may be a year before I see her."

"My mother is farther away than that," said Miss Wilbur, "and it may be many years before I see her again," and remembering the other's black garb, Letty understood.

For a time the two girls wept together, and when their tears had lightened their hearts a little, they talked tenderly, of their homes and kindred, and came nearer together than in a year of ordinary intercourse. Then Letty brought out her box of holly and fastened a spray on Miss Wilbur's shoulder, saying, "Now, let's make some big wreaths for our windows."

"Yes," said the other, "or"—

"Or what?" asked Letty.

"Wouldn't it be nice to put a piece at every plate, so all the girls could enjoy it? You suggested it, pinning this piece on me."

Letty caught at the idea at once. "We'll break it up, and after everybody is abed, we'll go down and distribute it and won't they wonder where it came from?"

A couple of hours later, the two girls crept noiselessly upstairs and as they parted at Letty's door, Miss Wilbur stooped and kissed her cheek, whispering, "I believe you saved my heart from breaking tonight," and slipped into her room before Letty could answer.

When the girls trooped down to breakfast Christmas morning and saw the long white tables bordered with shining leaves and bright berries, there were many "Ohs" and "Ahs," and much wonderment, and soon the girls were pinning them on their dresses or tucking them in their hair. Everybody was in high spirits, and Letty found herself giving and receiving "Merry Christmases," right and left. She had no thought that she had helped toward the cheer of the day, but Katy and the girl with the hanging dress-braid and the laundry girls and the girls with errands and the night watchman—or to speak accurately, the night watchman—had told tales and when Letty went up to her room, she found on her table a vase of tall chrysanthemums, and the card with them said, "For the one who has done the most to give the Home a Merry Christmas."

And upon the girl who in homesickness and poverty had lived the Christmas spirit, fell the Christmas peace.—Congregationalist.

#### NEVER FORGET IT.

Girls, this is for you: Never forget for a single instant as long as you live that the "men folks" are continually on the firing line in this battle of life. You little dream what blows they get and what wounds they carry. Never nag a man. Never whine at him. Of course, he doesn't wipe his feet, nor hang up his clothes, nor put things away, nor shut doors and drawers. Dear me, you didn't think you were marrying an "old maid," did you? Nag & Whine is the firm that runs the divorce mills. So, girls, be good to us when we come indoors. There is only a fight with hard knocks for us out in the world.—A Georgia Editor.

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